



Oxley Nature Center

May/June, 2009

Volume 181

Mohawk Park charges a \$2 fee per car on weekends April through October for non-members.

Oxley Nature Center:

-The Interpretive Building will be open Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and Sunday 12 noon- 4:30 p.m.

-Gate and parking lot is open daily, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. except most City holidays.
-Hiking trails are accessible during Mohawk Park hours, 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Redbud Valley Nature Preserve is closed:

all Mondays and Tuesdays.
-Open Wednesday through Sunday, from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. only. Hiking after these hours is not allowed.
-Interpretive building is open Wednesday through Sunday 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
-Closed most City holidays,

Holiday Closings for Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

Monday, May 25.

Program information

918-669-6644

[-Oxley@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:Oxley@cityoftulsa.org)

-Website at "<http://www.oxlenaturecenter.org>".

**** Please register for classes 48 hours in advance unless otherwise stated.**

-Some classes require supplies and allow limited enrollment.
-Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated.
-Most programs are stroller/wheelchair accessible.

Remembering the Old, Celebrating the New

By Donna Horton

It was early spring of 1981– the previous summer had been a scorcher. The winter just ending had been as cold as the summer had been hot. The spring rains had begun.

I had taken an afternoon break from my duties at Sequoyah State Park's Three Forks Nature Center to visit Oxley Nature Center in Tulsa. The Oxley staff and I talked shop, discussing interpretive programming for different audiences. We walked the trails, toured the Teaching Shelter, and compared our two facilities. The real excitement, though, was Oxley Nature Center's new building.

There was no physical Interpretive Building yet, so we admired the impressive new mound of soil next to a pit that had just become a rain-filled pond, already hopping with frogs. The outline of the building could only be guessed at from the foundations being measured and framed. However, the busy vibrant hub that would become the Oxley-Yetter Interpretive Building could already be seen in the eyes of Bob Jennings and his staff of two naturalists.



Oxley Nature Center had been presenting guided tours for over two years; Bob Jennings was coming up on his third anniversary of employment. It had taken several years to organize the fund-raising that made it possible to build office and exhibit space. The Interpretive Building did not actually open until 1981. The Oxley staff had been working out of a closet a mile away.

When I came to work here in 1983, the staff had grown to four full-time and two summer naturalists. The office spaces were full. The exhibits were all built in-house, mostly by naturalists with more training as exhibit designers than as carpenters or mural painters. Those slowly built exhibits survived many years of hands-on use, and were enjoyed by generations of visitors.

As much as we all loved the old exhibits, it really was time for new ones. This time a professional studio would be hired to build them. The Friends of Oxley started raising funds but soon realized it was just not possible to put new exhibits in a building with a leaky roof. The building was in much worse shape than we thought. The staff had grown to six full-time and four seasonal naturalists. The new roof project somehow grew miraculously to become a desperately needed total renovation.

Twenty-eight years ago our two nature center staffs debated the pros and cons of operating an exhibit building. The “yes” side is easy. Who would say “no” to flushing toilets and drinking fountains, as well as beautiful informative exhibits protected from heat, cold, and storms? It’s a good place to begin your visit! An indoor classroom is a convenient place for meetings, programs, volunteer award dinners, birthday parties, and a good back-up space for outdoor events. Running a nature center takes a tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes work that requires desks and chairs, telephones and computers, and an unbelievable number of tools. Then there are those boxes and cabinets full of intriguing stuff.



The “no” side is not so easy, but is perhaps even more relevant in the 21st century. It is tempting to stay inside, where it is comfortable, and think that you have experienced nature. We found out during 2008 that a building is a very good thing, but nature is not inside.

We are very glad that so many of you continued to walk the trails, volunteer your time, and attend programs, even without an indoor space. We learned there may even be some of you who have never come indoors to look at the exhibits. It is easy to sit at a desk and, except for trail maintenance or programs, not find the time to get outside to visit with hikers, to see and hear and smell and feel and experience the outdoor part along with our visitors. Let’s make a pact: come inside and enjoy the wonderful new building and exhibits, and we’ll come out and see you on the trails!

We can do both on Saturday June 27th, when we celebrate with a Grand Reopening.

Nature Center Happenings

Volunteer Naturalists Graduate

The following people have completed our basic volunteer naturalist training program:

JoAnn Kester, Heather Navarro, JoAnn Smith, Don Brosh, Ed Cumming, Sandra White, and Abby Furgason (our student intern).

Ed Cumming, JoAnn Kester, Heather Navarro, and JoAnn Smith joined our weekday volunteer naturalists on the trails immediately, leading tours for area school children. Don Brosh stands ready to lead weekend tours.

They explore forest, wetland, and grassland habitats at Oxley, sharing new discoveries at every turn.

Mary Coley and Sandra White are new volunteer visitor center hosts and **William Ashley** has joined our trail work and burn crew.

New Oxley Nature Center Association Board Members include: **Rusty Grimpe, Kim Shannon and MaryAnn Summerfield.**

Welcome to our Team. We could not do it without **you!**

"A joy shared is a joy doubled."

— GOETHE



"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder . . . He needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in."

— Rachel Carson

Evening Walks

\$2 general public, members free. Register in advance, all ages

Full Flower Moon, Friday, May 8, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

The full moon will shine down on an abundance of wildflowers following spring rains and plenty of sunshine. Join us on the trails at Oxley.

May New Moon, Saturday, May 23, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Join us for a walk under a new moon at Oxley. We will hone our senses to the time of twilight. Will there be fireflies and bats, crickets and armadillos? Come find out.

Full Strawberry Moon, Sat., June 6, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Wild strawberries signal a time of plenty, food from the earth. Will we find strawberries growing at Oxley, or something else? Who eats what under a full moon?

Kid's Saturday Programs

May 9, 10-11 a.m. Please call and register in advance

Discovery Club (Ages 3-5) Each child accompanied by an adult, please

"Do the Locomotion" Let's observe patterns of animal movement from a different viewing angle.

Adventure Club (Ages 6-8) Kids only, please

"What's a Flower For?" Not all flowers are pretty, but they all have important jobs. We'll look at some different kinds and see how they get their jobs done!



Junior Naturalist (Ages 9-11) Kids only, please

"Sowing Seed Paper" Using recycled items like laundry lint, plant material and seeds we'll create a paper "mash". Then we'll launch our seed balls out into the prairie, where they will grow!

4th of July North American Butterfly Count

You Can Be a Citizen Scientist!

Join us at Oxley on July 7th to spot, count, tally, and identify butterflies. Information gathered will be used to supplement the NABA Summer Butterfly Count held annually in June and July.

Citizen scientists participate in local counts, increase their own knowledge, raise public awareness, and contribute valuable data about butterfly populations.

Date: Tuesday, July 7

Time: 8:30 a.m. until dusk (Participate in all or part of the count)

****Please call and register in advance.** The \$3 fee will be waived if you register before July 2.

No experience is necessary. You'll work in teams with experienced naturalists counting in different areas.

Programs and Special Events

MAY

2 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required

Today is Audubon's "Big Day Count". Join us at Oxley to find and count birds to add to their census. Bring binoculars if you have them.

10 "Furoshiki for Mothers Day" Ages: 12 to Adult
Sunday 2:00-4:00 p.m.
\$5 for general public \$3 for members

Furoshiki is an eco-friendly wrapping cloth that promotes care for the environment and reduces waste. We will dye a 24X24 inch piece of cloth with natural dyes and learn how to fold it as a gift wrapping cloth or use it as an art piece. Bring your mom, a friend, and your creativity and meet at Oxley.

16 "Butterflies" Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required

Join us at Oxley to see how many different kinds of butterflies we can find. Bring binoculars if you have them.

23 "Wildflower Walk" Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free no registration required

The flower season is well underway following spring rains and abundant sunshine. Why do some trees and shrubs, vines and herbs make some people sneeze? Join us at Oxley to find out.

24 "Whittlin' Whistles" Ages: 12 to adult
Sunday 2:00-3:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

When the sap is rizen it's a good time to make slip bark whistles. Come learn how and find out which trees make the best ones. Meet at Oxley.

31 "There's Nothing Yucky About Yucca" Ages: 12 to adult
Sunday 2:00-3:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

More than just an ornamental plant or pasture weed, this member of the lily family has many uses. You can start a friction fire, wash your hair, or make cordage. Discover how and more. Meet at Oxley.

JUNE

6 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required

We may watch the kingfisher fishing in the pond, or look for warblers along Coal Creek. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

13 "Beginning Bird Gardening" Ages: All
Saturday 1:00-2:30 p.m.
\$3 for general public \$1 for members

Let's look at your basic bird garden and see what it takes to start one from scratch. What do birds need: food, water, and shelter; and how can we provide those elements? Meet at Oxley.

14 "Mud Bugs" Ages: 3-5 each accompanied by adult
Sunday 2:00-3:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

We're going to explore a wetland with all our senses. Come prepared to get wet and muddy, bring a change of clothes along with you. Meet at Oxley.

20 "Butterflies" Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required

Will we see Red Admirals and Fiery Skippers? What else is flying? Bring binoculars if you have them and meet at Oxley.

21 "Wild Dads" Ages: All
Sunday 6:00-7:45 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

How better to celebrate Father's Day than an evening stroll on the longest day of the year at Redbud Valley. We may even find some wildlife dads, too. This hike is not stroller or handicapped accessible.

27 "Wildflower Walk" Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free no registration required

The mulberry and blackberry fruits should be ripe. Join us at Oxley to see who is dining on them.

Please register two days in advance of classes unless stated otherwise.

Oxley Nature Center Grand Opening

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ We want you to join us for a celebration on Saturday, June 27 ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Bring your children!



Bring your family!

Bring your friends!



Check our website for further details.

Join us for the festivities from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the general public. We will have hikes, a variety of activities such as birding and wildflower walks, dip netting, and pioneer skill demonstrations.

Explore our native landscape and learn what to plant to attract native pollinators, birds, and other wildlife to your own backyard. Come inside and enjoy our new exhibits. Bring a blanket and a picnic lunch. We look forward to seeing you!

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Redbud Valley Nature Preserve

Don't forget to visit this wonderful site for a more rugged hike and to refresh your spirit!

Redbud Valley is open:
Wednesdays through Sundays
from 8:00—5:00 p.m.

It offers limestone bluffs, springs, and unique flora including walking ferns, cactus, smoke trees, blue ash, sugar maples, and a plethora of wildflowers.

This habitat is home to tarantulas and scorpions, who live under the rocks by day. Deer, bobcat, armadillo, and other mammals, numerous birds, reptiles and amphibians and insects also make their homes here.

Here you can see crinoid and other fossils from a long ago sea bed.

Because it is a Preserve, hikers must remain on the trails. Come see us!

